6/8/73

Dear Walter,

Thanks for the article on government secrecy and your note saying Bantam is not going to do the "Romero" book. Jaffe made a proper decision. Too many men are tempted to do social harm when there is prospect of immediate profit.

I have made no effort to follow this book because I have been too busy. I am still interested in what I think it probably represents, ones of the workings of the official Department of Disniformation.

Your comment on the book "(obviously fiction, as you had guessed.)" falls a bit short. I do not regard it as a guess any more than a doctor making a correct diagnosis regards the analysis he is prepared to make as a guess. That the work had to be fiction was one of the immediately-apparent certainties. Have you forgotten that within a short time and while doing other things I immediately traced parts of the story to other books Bantam had published? That this could be happenstance is obvious. But the fact remains that Bantam had published a work that provided parts of this concoction. It is also probable that because under Jaffe Bantam has grown to what it is he and Bantam would have been singled out on the book. That does not mean this little twist should be ignored in analyzing what could be behind "$400,000 to Kill Kennedy in Paris."

If you hear further aboxut U.S. publication or anything indicating it is part of a black function, I'd like to know, of course.

I am not surprized that your Watergate Special has not appeared. With a breaking story a book that does little more than retell the told has serious problems. I am disappointed that the position Bantam has earned depresses the market on topical works. When I was in New York I made a little inquiry about a Watergate book. The market seems to break into two parts, serious work and trash, cheap commercialism. For the latter there appears to be a market. For serious work, the reaction I got is that Bantam will cream the market and no other book can make its way. I have a friend who has been making inquiry and there is no encouragement at all.

In the long view, the most important works can't be of the kind Mollenhoff and the Post reporters can or will do. There is a need for the rehashes they will both do well but there also is a need for more, especially on this subject and at this time. It is close to a certainty that neither book will be of the kind I regard as essential in any kind of decent society. Yet a combination of fear, disguised as something else, and genuine commercial fear of Bantam makes it close to impossible.

The odd things is that the kind of book I regard as needed is the only one that could come out fast safely, the only one that would not be dated by events. I could have done it in a month. And the odd thing here is that it would also have had fact that has not come out and probably won't.

If I have no real hope and no prospect, I have been making notes in the event there is the possibility of this kind of book. If I hadnothing else to do and could be assured of responsible editing, it could be done very fast.

It seems to me, however, that publishing is sick when only crap can find a ready market when such things happen in our country.

Best regards,

Excuse the haste. I want to catch the morning TV news and as soon as it is over I must take my wife into town.